

Program Planning Summary
State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education

1. **College:** Aiken Technical College
2. **Award:** Associate Degree in Health Science
3. **Major:** Dental Hygiene
4. **Designation:** (Check one)
 - a. New Program Proposal
 83 Number of credit hours
 - b. Program Modification
 _____ Number of credit hours

5. **Proposed Date of Implementation:** Fall 2009

6. Justification of Need:

Aiken Technical College (ATC) is proposing an Associate Degree in Health Science with a major in Dental Hygiene. This program will prepare students to function as integral members of a dental health team. Dental hygienists are licensed health care professionals that specialize in preventing oral health problems and diseases. The primary responsibility of the dental hygienist is to treat and educate patients in the control and prevention of oral diseases. Typical functions of the clinical dental hygienist include:

- assessing health histories
- evaluating and charting oral conditions
- removing deposits (plaque, calculus, and stain) from the teeth
- exposing and processing dental radiographs
- applying preventive agents to the tooth surfaces such as fluoride and sealants
- providing individualized oral hygiene instruction services

The program will focus on building students' professional knowledge and skills, from which they can develop an understanding and concern for total patient care. Upon completion of the program, graduates will have all of the competencies needed to successfully complete the dental hygienist licensure examination. Additionally, graduates will be endowed with respect for their profession, dedicated to preventive dental care, and demonstrate the desire for continuing their education.

The ATC mission includes "educating and training students to provide an effective workforce . . . and . . . providing citizens . . . opportunities for educational, economic, professional, and social and personal development." The proposed Dental Hygiene Program's mission aligns with the ATC mission, whereas, the program "will enable students to achieve their personal and professional goals, contribute to the quality of life in the community, and support the economic development of Aiken County."

According to the United States Department of Labor's Web site, employment of dental hygienists is expected to increase by 30% through 2016, ranking dental hygiene as one of the thirty fastest-growing occupations. Growth of the aging population who are retaining their natural teeth and the decline in the number of dental professionals responding to the increasing demand for dental care will further enhance the need for qualified dental hygienists.

7. Anticipated Program Demand and Productivity:

ATC's needs assessment echoes national and state-wide trends in the dental hygiene field. There are approximately 50 dentists currently practicing in Aiken County. A survey of employment opportunities has been completed and there is two-fold support for clinical affiliation and graduate employment. The need survey results support the local need for a dental hygiene program to serve the employers of Aiken County. Twenty-two respondents indicated a need for a total of 36 full-time employees over the next three years with hourly income of \$25-\$27 per hour. Additionally, survey results indicated the need for 22 part-time dental hygienists at a salary of \$25-\$27 over the next three years. Many respondents expressed extreme difficulty in recruiting qualified dental hygienists in the college's service area and noted tremendous support for the program.

Currently, ATC has a one-plus-one articulation agreement in dental hygiene with Midlands Technical College (MTC). Annually, 20-25 students declare pre-dental hygiene as their major at ATC. Our most recent numbers reveal that 89 students have declared pre-dental hygiene as their major and are taking classes in anticipation of entering Phase II at MTC. The existing articulation agreement ensures that only three students will be accepted into Phase II each year, leaving many students discouraged and abandoning their goal of becoming dental hygienists. The proposed dental hygiene program will enroll 18 students annually with an anticipated attrition rate of 15-20%. This estimate is based on the average attrition rate of the six technical colleges that are currently graduating dental hygiene students.

8. Assessment of Extent to Which Proposed Program Duplicates Existing Programs in the State:

Six technical colleges across the state – MTC, Trident Technical College, Greenville Technical College, Horry-Georgetown Technical College, Florence-Darlington Technical College, and York Technical College—currently offer an Associate Degree in Health Science with a major in Dental Hygiene. All of these programs are designed to prepare graduates for success on the licensure exam and in the job market. According to the most recent program evaluation report, all of these programs are in good standing. The programs are also in good standing with the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation. As noted above, ATC currently has an articulation agreement in place with MTC's dental hygiene program. However, very few ATC students are able to allocate the time and fiscal resources required to successfully participate in and complete a dental hygiene program that is located outside of their local area. Therefore, the needs of the local dental healthcare providers are not fully being met through the existing linkages.

9. Relationship of the Proposed Program to Existing Programs at the Proposing Institution:

Through the Health Science Division, ATC offers Associate Degrees in Nursing and Radiologic Technology; Health Science Diploma programs in Expanded Duty Dental Assisting, Practical Nursing, and Surgical Technology; Certificates are offered in Medical Assisting, Medical Coding, Pre-Dental Hygiene, Pre-Physical Therapy Assistant, and Pre-Pharmacy Technician.

The proposed Dental Hygiene program is intended as a separate and independent program from the Expanded Duty Dental Assisting Program. American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation standards for the two programs does not allow the diploma program to layer into the degree program. However, a certified dental assistant who graduated from an accredited Expanded Duty Dental Assisting program will qualify to take an exemption examination for course credit in dental materials and dental radiography because the content is similar in both programs.

The proposed Dental Hygiene program will be under the umbrella of the Health Science Division. All of the general education courses required for the proposed program are currently in place at the college. ATC will add existing dental hygiene courses from the state's Catalog of Approved Courses (CAC) to the local catalog. However, no new courses will be added to the state CAC.

10. Relationship of the Proposed Program to Other Institutions via Inter-Institutional Cooperation:

The proposed program is designed primarily as a terminal stand-alone degree program. The goal of the proposed program is to provide program graduates with the competencies to successfully complete the licensure requirements for South Carolina. As previously discussed, the current articulation agreement in place with MTC is no longer meeting the needs of the local service area.

11. Total Costs Associated With Implementing the Proposed Program (General Estimates Only)

The current dental clinic, dental materials lab, and classroom facilities, used for clinical instruction in the Expanded Duty Dental Assisting Program, are of sufficient size to meet the needs of the proposed Dental Hygiene Program. Facilities can currently accommodate 18 first-year and 18 second-year dental hygiene students, as well as the current students enrolled in the dental assisting diploma program. The majority of costs associated with the dental hygiene program are salaries and fringe benefits. The following chart illustrates anticipated costs:

ANNUAL ESTIMATED COSTS

	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year
Equipment	\$113,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Operation Budget	\$24,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Library Supplies	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Personnel (Salaries plus fringe benefits)	\$151,480	\$211,940	\$218,300
Total Projected Costs	\$291,480	\$239,940	\$246,300

(Signature of the President)

(Date)